



Comptroller General
of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20548

Decision

Matter of: Carlos Mitchell

File: B-257670

Date: January 10, 1995

DIGEST

An employee on temporary duty used a recreational vehicle (RV) for lodging when extreme weather conditions forced him to leave the RV and relocate in a motel. The employee may be allowed full per diem allowance at the motel and reimbursed the actual expenses for the RV during this period, provided the agency determines that he acted reasonably and was unable to occupy the RV because of conditions beyond his control.

DECISION

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) asks whether Mr. Carlos Mitchell, a Disaster Assistance Employee, may be reimbursed for dual lodging expenses incurred due to extreme weather conditions.¹ For the following reasons, we find that he may be so reimbursed.

While on temporary duty, Mr. Mitchell used his personal recreational vehicle (RV) for lodging during the Midwest floods of 1993 from September 19, 1993, through January 17, 1994. FEMA authorized use of the RV and established his lodging rate at \$15 per day for campsite and utilities. See 41 C.F.R. § 301-7.14(b)(1) (1994). By using his privately owned RV in this manner, Mr. Mitchell saved the government approximately \$4,400 in lodging expenses.

Because of extreme weather conditions on January 17, 1994, however, Mr. Mitchell had to move out of the RV and into a motel. At that time there was approximately 8 inches of snow on the ground and the temperature was 15 degrees below zero. As a result of continued extreme weather conditions he was unable to move back into the RV until March 27, 1994. Thus, in addition to lodging expenses at the motel for the period of

¹This request was submitted by Mr. Gary D. Johnson, Acting Chief Financial Officer, Office of Financial Management, FEMA, Washington, DC.

January 17 to March 27, 1994, Mr. Mitchell seeks reimbursement of \$825 for the RV (campsite and utilities at \$15 per day for 55 days).²

When an employee acts reasonably as determined by the agency in incurring lodging costs while on temporary duty, but is unable to occupy the lodging because of conditions beyond his control, we have held that the employee may be allowed the full per diem allowance for the lodgings actually occupied and may be reimbursed actual expenses incurred for the lodging not occupied, provided the agency determines that the employee acted reasonably in incurring the expenses. See Milton J. Olsen, 60 Comp. Gen. 630 (1981); Nancy Farabee, B-244666, Feb. 14, 1992.

Accordingly, if the agency determines that the extreme weather conditions were the cause of Mr. Mitchell's incurring dual lodging expenses and that Mr. Mitchell acted reasonably in the circumstances, he may be reimbursed the campsite utility expenses for the RV in addition to per diem while staying at the motel.

/s/ Seymour Efros
for Robert P. Murphy
General Counsel

²According to the record, FEMA has already paid Mr. Mitchell's dual lodging expenses for the period from January 17 to 31, 1994. Thus, the amount referenced above covers only the period from February 1 to March 27 1994.